1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
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604 The maternal uncle (*nobo*) has no real authority over the
602 child, and his ceremonial obligations towards it are somewhat vague. However, there exists a cordial relationship between the two, and the *nobo* is treated with respect as a relative of importance. It is worth remarking that an Orokaiva child, while belonging to the people of its father, is very ready to identify itself also with those of its mother. When living with the latter and helping the maternal uncle in his work the child feels itself to belong for the time being to the maternal clan. At such a time it will use the maternal plant emblem, and indeed at all times it will name that emblem as subsidiary to the one it inherits from its father. In short, where the child, who belongs indisputably to its father's clan, is still on such friendly and intimate footing with its mother's, we might say that the system, although patrilineal in theory, was almost bilateral in effect.

861 Regarding the actual control of children we may note that they are seldom struck or smacked even in anger, and that they are never chastised by way of correction. A scolding seems always sufficient to check a naughty child. On the whole parents are very tolerant and children well-behaved.

From Childhood to Manhood

844 *Childbirth and Infancy.* In childbirth a woman is attended normally by women alone, though male 'doctors' may be called in to assist, not so much directly as by massaging, punching the back, and blowing into the ears of the woman in labour. The cord is tied, but I have no information as to its disposal. The afterbirth is treated by various alternative methods, some of which are thought to affect the mother subsequently. It may be placed in a small receptacle built in a tree where it is left to decompose; it may be buried (if at the butt of a coco-nut tree the roots would enclose or constrict it, and the result would be to render the mother barren in future); I have been told it may be given to a sow to eat, 'when it is supposed to effect a transfer of fecundity from the women to the pig'. In some cases a small enclosure is built underneath the house expressly to prevent the pig gaining access to the afterbirth, which is allowed to fall

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through the house floor; and it is probably the same notion at work: if the animal were to eat the afterbirth it might have an adverse effect on the woman's fecundity. 844

In the one instance of which I have definite information the confinement took place in the afternoon and the child was at the breast next morning. Suckling may continue till the child has long passed the stage of learning to walk, though it is treated to a variety of solid foods as well. [863]

During the first few days of the child's life its father must avoid the dangers of gardening. If he were to strike at a young sapling with his axe it would be as if he struck at his baby's neck, with the possible result that 'the blood would come up' and the child choke and die. This association of ideas I have met with several times, and Mr. Flint records the same, as if it were a somewhat ghastly obsession. 'One man told me he could not fell a tree until his child was two days old. I asked him the reason. He informed me that if he did so it would be the same as cutting his baby's throat.' This couvade-like practice is very general. In rather extreme form it appears in another of Mr. Flint's instances. His interpreter at Kokoda had washed clothes the day his first child was born, with what proved to be fatal results. On the birth of his second he applied for two days' leave from the office, lest this child should die too, and needless to say received it from a sympathetic master, though his work consisted merely in interpreting.[1] It is for a somewhat different reason that the father refuses to plant taro too soon after his child is born: here he is considering his garden, for the plant would rot in the ground like the buried placenta. 846

It is said that abnormal children would be strangled at birth and buried, and this is probably true. But whether a mother would destroy a child who simply made one too many in her family and necessitated unwelcome work and trouble, is certainly a matter of doubt, although it has been declared to be the case by one or two witnesses. It is at least certain that a child who had lived long enough to find a place in its parents' affections would not be deliberately killed. But as life in itself is regarded very lightly, it is by 847

[1] *Annual Report*, 1924–5, p. 47.